

**Hearing on SCR 4002
House Agriculture Committee
March 20, 2025**

Testimony of Mark Staples, registered lobbyist for The Nature Conservancy in North Dakota

Chair Beltz and members of the House Agriculture Committee:

The Nature Conservancy has been working to help people and nature thrive for more than 70 years, including on-the-ground conservation in North Dakota since 1971. We work alongside private landowners and partner organizations to restore and improve management of lands and waters in the state for the benefit and enjoyment of all.

We oppose SCR 4002 and encourage the committee to give this resolution a Do Not Pass recommendation.

Over the years, private landowners have made the voluntary decision to enter into conservation agreements with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service with the understanding and confidence that their lands would continue to be available for the enjoyment and benefit of North Dakotans into the future. This resolution suggests that this guarantee should be revocable, thereby invalidating legal transactions and threatening the continued availability of the natural resources these agreements are designed to conserve.

Voluntary conservation agreements are not right for every landowner. But the choices of those private landowners who voluntarily entered into agreements should be respected. Lasting conservation agreements should continue to be an option for the private landowners who choose to utilize this tool to steward the wetlands and grasslands of this great state for years to come.

We urge the committee to oppose this resolution and continue respecting the integrity of voluntary agreements made with North Dakota's private landowners.